

Jeremiah 1-3, 7, 16-18, 20 Show Notes

Ep 174: Jeremiah 1-20

The Book of Jeremiah, second of the three major prophets, is immensely complex. Its different interpretive voices stretch across several generations and do not cohere into an easily identifiable and uniform theology. Instead, in both poetry and prose, the Book of Jeremiah witnesses an ongoing conversation among different advocates concerning the crisis of Babylon's expansion and Jerusalem's demise.¹

The Prophet Jeremiah in his Historical Context

Of all the prophets, Jeremiah is the one who conveys to us the most vivid sense of the man behind the words. For other prophets, we get at best a minimal notation of vocation (arborist, priest) and town of origin. However, Jeremiah, a priest from the town of Anathoth near Jerusalem who was active from the 620s B.C.E. until after the destruction of the kingdom of Judah in 586, tells us a good deal about himself because of his continual anguish over his prophetic calling. Many episodes of his life, moreover, are reported in narrative detail, for the most part probably by his amanuensis Baruch son of Neriah.² Like Moses, who was of Levitical descent, Jeremiah is a priest and prophet who guided his people for forty years—often in the face of stiff opposition—but, unlike Moses who led the people from Egypt into the promised land, Jeremiah saw the exile of his people from that same promised land and lived out his own days in Egypt.³ He was a constant opponent of King Jehoiakim, an Egyptian sympathizer who led his nation into war against Babylonia, and of King Zedekiah, a Babylonian appointee who was unable to prevent a second war against Babylonia. ***Jeremiah claimed that Judah must submit to Babylonia or suffer the consequences***, and he pointed to the destruction of his own ancestral sanctuary at Shiloh to make his point: The people must observe God's teaching (torah), including its moral injunctions and its portrayal of Egypt as Israel's oppressor, rather than rely on the security symbolized by the existence of the Jerusalem Temple.⁴

¹ Walter Brueggemann, [*The Theology of the Book of Jeremiah*](#), Cambridge University Press, 2007. Brueggemann explains (p.1), "The Book of Jeremiah, who was the second of the three major prophets, is situated between Isaiah and Ezekiel and is an immensely complex book. Indeed, it is so complex that some informed readers have concluded that it is impossible to read the book as a coherent whole and have declared it "unreadable."

² Robert Alter, *The Hebrew Bible*, p. 849.

³ We cannot be certain how long Jeremiah was incarcerated, but it seems from the fragmentary account, that he ***spent nearly the entire eleven years of Zedekiah's reign in confinement in the court of the prison***. This conclusion is drawn from the fact that Lehi left Jerusalem in the first year of the reign of Zedekiah; Jeremiah was already in prison when Nephi and his brothers returned to get the family of Ishmael, and he was not released until the city fell to Babylon in the eleventh year. At the time of Jerusalem's destruction, Nebuchadnezzar gave Jeremiah the opportunity to go wherever he wanted, and he chose to stay among the people in his own land (Jeremiah 40). Following some internal problems, the people desired to go to Egypt, but Jeremiah prophesied against that action. They disregarded Jeremiah's prophecy, and went into Egypt, taking the now aging prophet with them (Jeremiah 41-43). ***It is not known how long they remained in their homeland before going to Egypt, or how long Jeremiah was in Egypt***, because this episode concludes the record of the life of the prophet from Anathoth. Monte S. Nyman, *The Words of Jeremiah*, Bookcraft, 1982, emphasis added.

⁴ Marvin A. Sweeney, *The Jewish Study Bible*, p. 917-918, emphasis added.

Challenges in His Early Ministry and Jeremiah's "Confessions"

His early ministry was difficult, as he prophesied of an enemy from the north that did not exactly come when people expected. At the time of his call,⁵ Jeremiah saw two visions (see Jeremiah 1:11, 13), the second of which included a view of "a seething pot" boiling in the north (Jer. 1.13). Its contents were to be poured out on Jerusalem and the land of Judah, for, as the Lord said: "Out of the north an evil shall break forth upon all the inhabitants of the land. For, lo, I will call all the families of the kingdoms of the north, saith the Lord; and they shall come, and they shall set every one his throne at the entering of the gates of Jerusalem, and against all the walls thereof round about, and against all the cities of Judah. And I will utter my judgments against them touching all their wickedness." (Jeremiah 1:14–16a.) This picture of wide spread destruction and punishment from the north became a feature of Jeremiah's message from the opening of his ministry. Notably, in each reference to this peril (Jeremiah 1:14ff.; 4:6; 6:1), just who was coming from the north remained unknown, apparently even to the prophet, for it was not until a much later date in his ministry that he identified this punishing force as the Chaldeans from Babylonia (see Jeremiah 21:4, 9; 22:25). We can observe thus far, then, that the Lord had apparently revealed to the youthful Jeremiah only the northerly route by which the peril would travel to Palestine, but not the foe who would come.⁶

We noted earlier that something had occurred during the early years of the prophet's career which drove him to complain bitterly about unfulfilled prophecies. Among other things, the situation had resulted in Jeremiah's being totally and publicly discredited. In fact, even his family had joined in a plot to take his life, apparently because whatever had happened had created an enormous public outcry against him. What had occurred that caused the prophet to complain so and motivated his family and friends to seek his life?⁷

S. Kent Brown argues that **the supposed Scythian invasion** that everyone thought was to happen but did not, was the reason everyone turned against Jeremiah and Jeremiah began to question the Lord.⁸

⁵ Around 627 BC.

⁶ S. Kent Brown, [History and Jeremiah's Crisis of Faith](#), *Isaiah and the Prophets: Inspired Voices from the Old Testament*, BYU Religious Studies Center, p. 107.

⁷ Brown, p. 107.

⁸ I call this "**The Invasion that Never Happened.**" The fifth century BC historian [Herodotus](#) tells his hearers that that **the Scythians, after becoming masters of Asia, marched south intending to invade Egypt**. On their way they passed along the coastline of Syria and Palestine, a movement which surely was known to the inhabitants of Judah and would have spread fear among the inhabitants. Arriving at the border of Egypt, between the Philistine kingdom and the Delta region, the Scythians were met by Pharaoh Psammetichos and were bribed with gifts and persuaded not to invade the Nile Valley. The Scythians then retraced their steps, plundering at least the Philistine city of Ashkelon, raiding the temple of Aphrodite Urania. Incidentally, this second sweep past the outlying communities of Judah would also have been known in Jerusalem. Herodotus reports that after returning to Asia, the Scythians were said to have ruled for twenty-eight years, even dominating the Assyrians, making them pay tribute. (Herodotus, [The Histories, 1.103–6.](#)) Brown relates that this invasion that never happened is what the people in Jerusalem expected in connection to the prophecies of the enemy coming from the north, at least in the early oracles of Jeremiah. Brown argues that the Scythians and their incursion into the lands surrounding Judah happened before 616 BC, within a decade of Jeremiah's call. The dates line up to make this theory plausible, that the invasion that didn't happen was the Scythian invasion, and Jeremiah's accusation that God had deceived him (Jer. 20.7) can be connected to this invasion that never happened. Of course, later in his ministry, Jeremiah cites the Babylonians as the ones coming from the north, but this can be seen as the political chess pieces become more pronounced. See Brown, p. 108-110.

Jeremiah gives a series of “confessions” that show that he is deeply disappointed in the supposed unfulfilled prophecies, thus considering that God has abandoned him.⁹ Brown writes that “in these solemn dirges one plainly sees that Jeremiah passed through a crisis which shook his faith in the Lord.” He lays out the following dirges, showing Jeremiah’s frustration with the Lord and the supposed unfulfilled nature of his prophecy:

Jeremiah 11.18–12.6 – People in his hometown plot to kill Jeremiah.

15.10–21 – Jeremiah laments, referring to God as “failing waters.”¹⁰ The Lord promises him protection.

17.9-10, 14–18 – Jeremiah’s enemies cry out “Where is the word of the Lord?” and Jeremiah begs for it to “come now!”¹¹

18.18–23 – Jeremiah pleads with the Lord that his enemies suffer.

20.7–12, 14–18 – Jeremiah states that he has been deceived and speaks of his dissonance in poignant speech. He wishes that he was never born.¹²

This was a trying moment for anyone to bring what he imperatively felt was God’s word to the people of Israel. A century before the beginning of Jeremiah’s mission, the northern kingdom of Israel had been overwhelmed by Assyrian invaders. A large part of the population was deported to sundry locations elsewhere in the Assyrian empire—this was when the so-called ten lost tribes were “lost”—and all vestiges of national sovereignty in the area once governed by the northern kingdom were eradicated. The extirpation of the northern kingdom was a national catastrophe that haunted its southern counterpart throughout the century and more that followed, since—given powerful military threats

⁹ Brown cites six confessions and Berlin and Brettler cite seven. Either way, these confessions demonstrate Jeremiah’s sad condition, the state of his enemies, and his frustration with God on a level near that of Job.

¹⁰ One can imagine Jeremiah remembering the joy and happiness which came to him when he was first called to be a spokesman to God’s people. But after mentioning that this event effectively set him apart from others (Jeremiah 15:17), he wrote a gloomy confession of his frustrations since his call, “Why is my pain perpetual, and my wound incurable, which refuseth to be healed? ***Wilt thou be altogether unto me as a liar, and as waters that fail?***” (Jeremiah 15:18.) Here, mentioning his injury which seemingly could not be healed, Jeremiah dared to refer to God as “failing waters.” **In a word, the prophet was distressed. What had gone wrong?** Significantly, this outburst led the Lord generously to reconfirm Jeremiah’s prophetic calling, almost—as we noted earlier—in the very words of his original commission (see Jeremiah 15:20–21; cf. 1:17–19). Brown, p. 110-111.

¹¹ Jer. 17.15 may hold a clue as to what had happened. We read: “Behold, they say unto me, where is the word of the Lord? **Let it come now.**” Plainly, Jeremiah was being teased and ridiculed because what he had prophesied had not come about. **Something had obviously gone amiss—at least in the view of his hearers—and he was being baited to say more and thus compound his apparent errors.** In this connection, we observe that in his fourth confession (Jeremiah 18:18–23) he noted how his persecutors devised ways to trap him in his words so that they might refute him and not feel obliged to listen seriously to his message. Again, it is worthwhile to point out the prophet’s reference here to constant harassment and persecution. Brown, p. 111-112, emphasis added.

¹² The last confession (Jeremiah 20:14–18) was written in the depths of despair. **I know of only one other mournful passage in all of scripture that can match its majestic blackness and sorrow.** (Job 3) Indeed, the prophet had been brought to the end of his strength and wit. His faith had run out. What made him feel that he had been deceived by God himself, that somehow the Lord had made sport of him and finally had abandoned him? Brown, p. 112. S. Kent Brown asserts that the source of Jeremiah’s malcontent was **the invasion that never happened.** The Scythian army, the “evil from the north,” did not invade Jerusalem. **It was this expectation, Brown asserts, that caused Jeremiah to be so downtrodden,** for at the time of his lament, no foe had come from the north to make the land desolate, and from the perspective of Jeremiah and his hearers, he was a false prophet.

from foreign powers (for the first part of this period, the principal threat continued to be Assyria, then superseded by Babylonia)—the fate that had overtaken Israel could easily overtake Judah as well. In some of his prophecies, Jeremiah harbors the hope of a restored Israel reunited with a restored Judah, but one may justly describe this as a utopian fantasy, because by the late seventh century B.C.E. and early in the next century there were no visible remnants of the kingdom of Israel that could serve as the ground for such a restoration.

The other major event that stamped a strong mark on Jeremiah's prophecies was the sweeping religious reforms instigated by King Josiah beginning around 622 B.C.E. The playbook for these reforms was the text purportedly discovered during Josiah's renovation of the Temple and referred to in the account of its discovery in Kings as "the book of teaching [torah]," which is to say, the Book of Deuteronomy. The virtually unanimous scholarly consensus is that the book in question, or at least its core, was actually composed at this time to provide a textual warrant for **the Josianic reforms**. Its agenda incorporated two main points, one cultic and the other a theologically driven theory of historical causation. The previous four Books of Moses had assumed the legitimacy of the worship of God of Israel throughout the land; Deuteronomy now insisted that the cult could be practiced only "in the place that I will choose," which clearly meant Jerusalem. Sacrifice to YHWH on the "high places," the rural shrines, was excoriated as sheer paganism. The exclusive centralization of the cult was thus associated with Deuteronomy's persistent preoccupation with backsliding into paganism and with the notion that the worship of strange gods would lead directly to national disaster and exile as punishment for the people's failure to honor the covenant with its God.

All this is translated into Jeremiah's central message. While, like the other prophets, he on occasion castigates his audiences for egregious acts of social injustice and perversion of the legal system, **his most repeated concern is with Judah's whoring after strange gods** (the sexual metaphor is often flaunted) and the devastation of the nation that it will inevitably bring about... often Jeremiah's prophecies are bitter denunciations of the people's wayward behavior accompanied by dire predictions that this will lead to scorched earth for the kingdom of Judah and exile for its inhabitants.

This sort of message, delivered at a time when Babylonian forces (597 B.C.E. and again in 587–586) were besieging Jerusalem, could not have made Jeremiah a very popular figure. The priests of his hometown of Anathoth, according to his own account, threatened to kill him.¹³ Zedekiah, the reigning monarch, had the scroll of his prophecies burned.¹⁴ (Jeremiah would promptly direct Baruch to make another copy.) Jeremiah was imprisoned more than once; in Jerusalem, his captors cast him into a deep, dried-up cistern with muck at the bottom, in the clear intention of leaving him there to die.¹⁵

Against this background, one readily understands **that Jeremiah saw his prophetic mission as a source of unending personal torment**. Several of the prophets, beginning with Moses himself, express a sense of unworthiness to take up the prophetic calling. Thus Jeremiah: "Alas, O Master, LORD, / for, look, I know not how to speak, / for I am but a lad." (1:6). The reasonable inference is that Jeremiah was quite young when he first received the call, but in contrast to other prophets, tormented reluctance persists

¹³ Jer. 11.21 reads: לִכְן־זֶה־אָמַר יְהוָה עַל־אֲנָשֵׁי עֲנֹתוֹת הַמְּבַקְשִׁים אֶת־נַפְשׁוֹ לֵאמֹר לֹא תִנְבֵּא בְשֵׁם יְהוָה וְלֹא תִמְוִית בְּיַדְנוּ
"Therefore this is what the Lord says concerning the people of Anathoth who are seeking your life/soul and saying, "You must not prophesy in the name of the Lord, or you will die by our hand."

¹⁴ Jer. 36.22-23.

¹⁵ Jer. 38.6.

throughout his career. If at first he felt unworthy for the task, as he goes on to carry it out, subjected to vilification, death threats, and imprisonment, he repeatedly wishes he could free himself from the burden of prophecy; nevertheless, the searing consciousness that God demands it of him will not allow him to relinquish the prophetic role. The most striking expression of this dilemma is the great poem in chapter 20 that begins, “You have enticed me, O LORD, and I was enticed. / You are stronger than I, and You prevailed,” and goes on to say, memorably, “I thought, ‘I will not recall Him, / nor will I speak anymore in His name.’ / But it was in my heart like burning fire / shut up in my bones.”¹⁶ ***Jeremiah figures as a kind of prisoner of conscience: he is acutely aware that conveying his message of scathing castigation and impending doom at the very moment the Babylonian army is descending on Jerusalem will bring him nothing but humiliation and angry rejection, yet he feels he has no alternative other than to tell his people the bitter truth...***

Dark clouds of disaster lower over the kingdom of Judah. In Jeremiah’s understanding, the disaster cannot be averted, for it is the ineluctable consequence of the people’s violation of its covenant with God, its reckless infatuation with the gods and goddesses of a pagan cult, and the commission of acts of promiscuity and even human sacrifice entailed by that cult. Politics is deeply implicated in this prophetic stance. ***The idea that Judah can parry the Babylonian threat by an alliance with Egypt is, in Jeremiah’s eyes, a hopeless delusion.*** (This would prove to be an accurate political judgment.) The devastation of its towns, the exile of many of its inhabitants—***the grim message that Jeremiah’s countrymen did not want to hear—will surely come, and very soon.*** As a counterpoint, Jeremiah is also able to envisage a time when Babylonia itself will be destroyed and the people of Judah once more settled in peace and prosperity in its land. God would establish, in Jeremiah’s pregnant phrase, a “new covenant” with His people. That upbeat message was dictated by an underlying theological assumption on the part of this harbinger of doom that, although God chastises Israel, His commitment to His people is for all time. But the vision of a radiant future remains a secondary emphasis in the somber prophecies of Jeremiah.¹⁷

Jeremiah was repeatedly imprisoned and castigated as a traitor for his views. When the Babylonians offered him a comfortable life in exile in recognition for his efforts, he refused it in order to remain with his people and begin the process of rebuilding even though the exile had just begun. Ultimately, Jeremiah fled to Egypt (Jeremiah 43), and he likely died there.¹⁸

Different Voices Within Jeremiah’s Writings

The Book of Jeremiah consists of the swirling of several interpretive voices, each of which offers a strong reading of the historical–theological crisis that preoccupies the book. These several voices, moreover, are in some contestation with each other about the meaning and significance of the crisis of Jerusalem and about an appropriate response to that crisis. ***The traditioning process that produced the final form of the text, moreover, has made no noticeable efforts to adjudicate between or to bring together in a coherent manner those several contesting voices.*** Rather, the final form of the text has permitted the several contesting voices to stand alongside one another without noticeable harmonization. In addition to the multiplicity of interpretive voices in the book, it is clear that the Book of Jeremiah is problematic

¹⁶ Jer. 20.7-9.

¹⁷ Robert Alter, [The Hebrew Bible: A Translation with Commentary](#), W.W. Norton & Co., 2018, p.849-852

¹⁸ Sweeney, *The Jewish Study Bible*, p. 918.

because it stretches over several generations, certainly beyond the credible extent of the lifetime of the person of Jeremiah.¹⁹

Composition of the Text

The book itself claims that the prophet's companion, the scribe Baruch ben Neriah, wrote several versions of Jeremiah's oracles (see especially chapter 36), and this may account for many of the narratives about the prophet. Furthermore, the literary style of the narratives and their overall perspective concerning the relationship between God and Israel correspond markedly to the narrative traditions of the books of Kings. Some modern scholars therefore maintain that Jeremiah and perhaps Baruch are associated with circles that composed the Deuteronomistic History (Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings). Nevertheless, these observations do not account for the full compositional history of the book. Jeremiah appears in two versions: the Hebrew Masoretic Text that appears in all Jewish Bibles and that stands as the basis for the book in Protestant Christian circles, and the Greek Septuagint version that originally served as Scripture in the Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox Christian traditions. **Although the Greek version contains many of the same oracles and narratives as the Hebrew version, it is approximately one eighth shorter and its content appears in a markedly different order;** for instance, the oracles concerning the nations appear as chapters 46-51 in the Hebrew version, but in the Greek version they appear as chapters 25-31 with a different sequence of nations. **Because the text of the Greek version corresponds with fragments of a Hebrew version of Jeremiah found among the Dead Sea Scrolls, many interpreters argue that the Greek version of the book represents an early edition of Jeremiah that was later expanded and rearranged to form the present Hebrew edition of the book.** Other fragments of Jeremiah that correspond to the Hebrew Masoretic Text also appear among the Dead Sea Scrolls, indicating that the two versions of the book circulated among Jews for several centuries following the lifetime of the prophet. **This of course points to the likelihood that writers other than Jeremiah or Baruch had a hand in the book's composition.** The fact that 51.64 ends "Thus far the words of Jeremiah," but the book contains an additional chapter, is but one reflection of its complicated editorial history. **Many modern scholars believe that an original Jeremianic core, largely poetic in nature, was supplemented by prose authors from the school of Deuteronomy, who re-edited the book and brought it more in line with Deuteronomic ideas and terminology.** Though this theory has much to commend it, it is very difficult to disentangle the editorial layers of the book.²⁰

Overall Structure of Jeremiah

The book of Jeremiah can be presented as including seventeen sections. With the exception of the concluding narrative concerning the fall of Jerusalem, which appears to be a modified version of 2 Kings 24.18-25.30, each section begins with a form of the prophetic word formula, "the word which came to Jeremiah from the LORD."

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| I. Jeremiah's early oracles concerning Jerusalem and Judah | 1.1-6.30 |
| II. Jeremiah's Temple sermon | 7.1-10.25 |

¹⁹ Brueggemann, p. 1-2.

²⁰ Sweeney, p. 918-919, emphasis added.

III. Jeremiah's lament concerning Judah's broken covenant with God	11.1-13.27
IV. The great drought and Judah's coming punishment	14.1-17.27
V. The symbolic action of the potter and the jug	18.1-20.18
VI. Jeremiah's oracles concerning the House of David and the prophets	21. 1-24.10
VII. Submission to Babylonia	25.1-29-32
VIII. Jeremiah's book of consolation	30.1-31.40
IX. Symbolic actions and oracles concerning the restoration	32.1-33-26
X. Jeremiah's oracle concerning King Zedekiah	34-1-7
XI. The oracle concerning slaves	34-8-22
XII. The fall of Jerusalem	35.1-39-18
XIII. The assassination of Gedaliah and its consequences	40.1-43-13
XIV. Jeremiah's oracle in Egypt	44.1-40
XV. Jeremiah's oracle to Baruch	45.1-5
XVI. Oracles concerning the nations	46.1-51.64
XVII. Concluding narrative concerning the fall of Jerusalem	52.1-34 ²¹

Similarities Between Jeremiah and Jesus

In both of their cases: Jerusalem was about to fall, the temple would suffer destruction soon, the worship of Yahweh had become formalistic, and there was need for emphasis on an individual relationship with God.

Both men had a message for Israel and the whole world.

Both of them used nature quite extensively for illustrative purposes in their teaching.

Both came from a high tradition: Jeremiah from a priestly, prophetic heritage, and Jesus from a divine, royal position.

Both were very conscious of their call from God.

Both condemned the commercialism of temple worship in their day (7:11; Matt. 21:13).

Their enemies charged both of them with political treason.

Both experienced persecutions, trials, and imprisonments.

Both foretold the destruction of the temple (7:14; Mark 13:2).

²¹ Sweeney, p. 920.

Both wept over Jerusalem (9:1; Luke 19:41).

Both condemned the priests of their day.

Both experienced rejection by members of their own families (12:6; John 1:11).

Both were so tenderhearted that some Jewish leaders identified them with the Suffering Servant of Isaiah 53.

Both loved Israel deeply.

Both were lonely (15:10; Isa. 53:3).

Both enjoyed unusually intimate fellowship with God (20:7; John 11:41-42).²²

Jeremiah 1-3: Jeremiah's Call

1. The Introduction (Jer. 1.1-3).²³
2. The Commission (Jer. 1.4-10).
 - a. "Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee, and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations!" (Jer. 1.5).²⁴

²² Thomas Constable, [notes on Jeremiah](#), accessed 9.19.22.

²³ Jeremiah was a priest from the city of Anathoth in the territory of the tribe of Benjamin. He is therefore a descendant of the priestly line of Eli, who presided as high priest in the sanctuary at Shiloh in the early years of Israel's history in the land (1 Sam. 1-4). Elide priests served as Israel's chief priests until the reign of King Solomon, who expelled Abiathar from Jerusalem to Anathoth in favor of Zadok, a high priest under David who founded the Zadokite priestly line in Jerusalem (1 Kings 1-2). The introduction further states that Jeremiah spoke from the thirteenth year of the reign of King Josiah son of Amon of Judah (627 BCE), through the reign of King Jehoiakim son of Josiah (608-598), and until the end of the eleventh year of King Zedekiah son of Josiah (597-586) when Jerusalem went into exile. Sweeney, p. 917.

²⁴ Dana Pike observes, "This is a fine example of a biblical passage that conveys the concept of election with vocabulary that is complementary to the Hebrew lexical root *bḥr*. The phrases "knew [*yd'*] you," "consecrated [*qdš*] you" ("sanctified" in KJV), and "appointed [*ntn*] you" ("ordained" in KJV) combine to forcefully express the idea that Jehovah chose Jeremiah. The threefold repetition of the personal pronoun "I" (Jehovah) further emphasizes this point. Jeremiah 1:5 is also one of the few passages in the Hebrew Bible in which the time of election is indicated. **In this case, Jeremiah was chosen by God before being formed in the womb.** Somewhat similar in concept is the passage in Isaiah 49 in which "Israel" is designated the Lord's "servant" whom He "called [*qr'*] . . . from the womb" (Isaiah 49:1-3). Subsequent verses repeat the idea that the Lord's servant was "formed... from the womb to be his servant" (Isaiah 49:5-6). While commentators dispute the identity of this servant, the points emphasized here are that the servant was chosen by Jehovah before birth to accomplish His will and that the vocabulary of election is broader than the lexical root *bḥr*, "choose."... **Taken as a whole, the Hebrew Bible depicts Jehovah as the universal ruler of heaven and earth who elected, or chose, a particular lineage (Abraham and Sarah's descendants through Isaac and Jacob) and who chose particular individuals within that lineage to accomplish His purposes, all within a covenant relationship.** Jehovah also chose groups and individuals outside this covenant lineage to provide assistance to the descendants of this chosen lineage and to impose negative consequences when they rebelliously exceeded the limits of His mercy." Dana Pike, *Before Jeremiah Was: Divine Election in the Ancient Near East*, in *A Witness for the Restoration: Essays in Honor of Robert J. Matthews*, ed. by Kent P. Jackson and Andrew C. Skinner, Provo, UT: BYU Religious Studies Center, 2007, p. 39-42, emphasis added.

- i. Joseph Smith taught, “Every man who has a calling to minister to the inhabitants of the world was ordained to that very purpose in the Grand Council of Heaven before this world was.”²⁵
 - ii. Brigham Young said, “It was decreed in the counsels of eternity, long before the foundations of the earth were laid, that he, Joseph Smith, should be the man, in the last dispensation of this world, to bring forth the word of God to the people, and receive the fulness of the keys and power of the Priesthood of the Son of God. The Lord had his eyes upon him, and upon his father, and upon his father's father, and upon their progenitors clear back to Abraham, and from Abraham to the flood, from the flood to Enoch, and from Enoch to Adam. He has watched that family and that blood as it has circulated from its fountain to the birth of that man. He was fore-ordained in eternity to preside over this last dispensation.”²⁶
- b. “I cannot speak, for I am a child!” (Jer. 1.6).
- 3. Two Symbolic Visions (Jer. 1.11-19).
 - a. Jeremiah sees the rod of an almond tree and a seething pot “tipped away from the north” (Jer. 1.11-13).²⁷
- 4. Jeremiah is told to cry repentance to Judah (Jer. 2.1-6.30).
 - a. Your fathers have walked after vanity... defiled the land... prophesied by Baal (Jer. 2.5-8).
 - i. “My people have committed two evils: they have forsaken me the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water” (Jer. 2.13).
 - ii. Judah has “Played the harlot... under every high hill and under every green tree” (Jer. 2.20; 3.6, 13; 17.2)
 - b. “**I will bring evil from the north, and a great destruction**” (Jer. 4.6).²⁸
 - i. “A seething pot that is turned to the north” (Jer. 1.13).
 - ii. “Thus hath the Lord said, The whole land shall be desolate; yet will I not make a full end” (Jer. 4.27).

²⁵ *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, p. 365.

²⁶ *Discourses of Brigham Young*, selected and arranged by John A. Widtsoe, Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1954, 108.

²⁷ At the time of his call, Jeremiah saw two visions (see Jeremiah 1:11, 13), the second of which included a view of “a seething pot” boiling in the north. Its contents were to be poured out on Jerusalem and the land of Judah, for, as the Lord said: “Out of the north an evil shall break forth upon all the inhabitants of the land. For, lo, I will call all the families of the kingdoms of the north, saith the Lord; and they shall come, and they shall set every one his throne at the entering of the gates of Jerusalem, and against all the walls thereof round about, and against all the cities of Judah. And I will utter my judgments against them touching all their wickedness.” (Jeremiah 1:14–16a.)

This picture of wide spread destruction and punishment from the north became a feature of Jeremiah's message from the opening of his ministry. Notably, ***in each reference to this peril*** (see Jeremiah 1:14ff.; 4:6; 6:1), ***just who was coming from the north remained unknown, apparently even to the prophet***, for it was not until a much later date in his ministry that he identified this punishing force as the Chaldeans from Babylonia (see Jeremiah 21:4, 9; 22:25). S. Kent Brown, [History and Jeremiah's Crisis of Faith](#), as found in *Isaiah and the Prophets: Inspired Voices from the Old Testament*, edited by Monte S. Nyman.

²⁸ The danger **coming out of the north** can be read as a general invasion (possibly the Scythians) here: Jer. 1.13-15; 4.6; 6.1, 22; 10.22; 13.20. Later, Jeremiah will identify the danger as the Babylonian forces: Jer. 20.4-6; 21.1-10; 22.24-25; 25.9.

- iii. “I will bring a nation upon you from afar... a mighty nation whose language thou knowest not” (Jer. 5.15).
- iv. “Thus saith the Lord of hosts, “Hew down the trees, and cast a mount against Jerusalem: this is the city to be visited, she is wholly oppression in the midst of her” (Jer. 6.6).²⁹

Jeremiah 7.1-10.25: Jeremiah’s Temple Sermon

1. Amend your ways, trust not lying words... Do not oppress the widow, fatherless, and the stranger. Do this and “I will cause you to dwell in this place... forever and ever” (Jer. 7.4-7).
2. Do not “burn incense to Baal” nor “walk after other gods, whom ye know not” (Jer. 7.9).
3. A strong denunciation of the making of cakes to the “Queen of Heaven” (Jer. 7.16-20).³⁰
 - a. The identity of the Queen of Heaven is unknown. Some identify her as Sapsu, the goddess of the sun in west Semitic religion.³¹ Others identify this goddess as Anat, the Lady of Heaven, fertility and warrior goddess who freed Baal from the underworld.³² Another candidate is Astarte, a goddess from the west Semitic speaking people, known as the “Queen of Heaven,” and identified with Venus, the Morning and Evening Star.³³ The goddess Ishtar is a strong candidate, as she is a fertility goddess, and bears the title “Queen of Heaven.”³⁴ Ishtar is the spouse of Tammuz, a god who dies and is mourned by Ishtar in connection with women who bake cakes for this occasion.³⁵ Lexicographers

²⁹ (Heb) Jer. 6.6 reads: עֲשֵׂה בְּקִרְבָּהּ עֵשֶׂק כְּלֵהּ הַפְּקֹד הַיָּא הָעִיר סִלְלָהּ עַל-יְרוּשָׁלַם וְשָׂפְכוּ עָלֶיהָ וְשָׂפְכוּ עָלֶיהָ וְשָׂפְכוּ עָלֶיהָ וְשָׂפְכוּ עָלֶיהָ. It can be translated: “For this is what the Lord of Hosts says, “Cut down the trees and raise up a ramp against Jerusalem. This city must be punished, all of her is **oppression** in her midst.” The Hebrew word עֲשֵׂק (pronounced o'-shek) denotes the idea that something is taken away by force or extortion. Unjust gain, fraud – this word reminds me of the Gadianton robbers as they are described in the Book of Mormon.

³⁰ Twice in the book of Jeremiah, in Jeremiah 7.16-20 and 44.15-19, 25, the people of Judah are condemned for worshipping the Queen of Heaven. Susan Ackerman, *Under Every Green Tree: Popular Religion in Sixth-century Judah*, Brill, Harvard University, 1992, p. 5. She continues (p. 6): Appended to the temple sermon are denunciations of several cult practices: the worship of the Queen of Heaven (7.16-20), reliance on sacrifice (7.29-34), and worship of astronomical bodies (8.1-3). Commentators assign the temple sermon and its appended sayings to sometime during the reign of Jehoiakim, in the last decade of the seventh century. The setting, of course, is Jerusalem. The sayings appended to Jeremiah’s temple sermon come from the hands of the Deuteronomistic editors of Jeremiah. This means that we do not in fact know from Jeremiah 7 whether Jeremiah himself prophesied against the cult of the Queen of Heaven or, more important for our purposes, whether the Deuteronomistic editors are accurate in locating the cult in late pre-exilic Jerusalem.

³¹ M. Dahood has put forth the opinion that this goddess is Sapsu, the goddess of the sun in west Semitic religion, citing CTA 23.54. Ackerman, who disagrees, gives her reasons why this can be read differently. Ackerman, p. 11-13. CTA stands for A. Herdner, *Corpus des tablettes en cuneiformes alphabetiques decouvertes a Ras Shamra-Ugarit de 1929 a 1939*. These are Ugaritic texts that are a corpus of ancient cuneiform texts discovered since 1928 in Ugarit (Ras Shamra) and Ras Ibn Hani in Syria. These documents were written in Ugaritic. Approximately 1,500 texts and fragments have been found to date. The texts were written in the 13th and 12th centuries BCE.

³² A. Vincent made this identification. Ackerman, p. 13. The war and fertility goddess Anat has been called “the great goddess who conceives but does not bear,” and is identified with the Greek goddess Athena.

³³ Ackerman, p. 23.

³⁴ Robert Alter, Marc Brettler and Adele Berlin take this position. See: *The Jewish Study Bible*, p. 939 and *The Hebrew Bible: A Translation with Commentary*, p. 3480/6509 electronic version.

³⁵ Ackerman, p. 33. She explains, “The death of Tammuz was, of course, an occasion of sorrow for his young bride, Ishtar, and Akkadian mythology preserves many of her laments over her dead lover. What is crucial to note for our purposes is that as it is Ishtar who mourns her dead lover in myth, so too is it women who ritually mourn the death

generally agree that *kawwanim*, the word used for the cakes baked for the Queen of Heaven in Jer. 7.18 and 44.19, is a loan word from the Akkadian *kamanu*, “cake.” In Akkadian texts *kamanu* cakes are often associated with the cult of Ishtar.³⁶ Other scholars see this as a syncretistic deity combining elements from these goddess figures.³⁷

- b. Jeremiah’s attack on the “Queen of Heaven” illustrates a tension. The people of the land and the prophetic and priestly class that controlled the temple had divergent views of religion. “Prophetic, priestly, and Deuteronomistic religion conservatively clung to one of the most ancient tenets of Yahwistic faith: “you shall not bow down before an alien god” (Ex. 34.14). The ideology of the people, on the other hand, involved incorporating many different religious practices into their worship. With these diversities, the people hoped, they would propitiate all aspects of divine power.”³⁸
 - c. Other views of the Lady, the Queen of Heaven.³⁹
4. Jeremiah reminds his listeners to remember Shiloh and the destruction there (Jer. 7.12).⁴⁰

of Tammuz in the Mesopotamian cult. This is vividly illustrated by Ezekiel 8.14, where it is women who are specifically identified as those who sit at the gate of the Jerusalem temple’s inner court wailing over the death of the fertility god. Thorkild Jacobsen notes that the story of Tammuz (Dumuzi) was characteristic and typical of the religions in the Ancient Near East at this time. He writes, “there is every reason to assume that this cult was characteristic and that its ritual and metaphorical patterns of wooing and wedding, death and lament, were widespread and typical, for traces and parallels are to be found in the lord of almost every major ancient Mesopotamian god... (these patterns) would seem, therefore, to constitute the forms of approach to the Numinous generally available.” Thorkild Jacobsen, [The Treasures of Darkness: A History of Mesopotamian Religion](#), Yale University Press, 1976, p. 73.

³⁶ Ackerman, p. 30-31.

³⁷ This is Ackerman’s position. She writes, “**I submit that the Queen of Heaven is a syncretistic deity whose character incorporates the aspects of west Semitic Astarte and east Semitic Ishtar.** This syncretism probably occurred early in Canaanite religious history, well before the sixth century. Ackerman, p. 34, emphasis added.

³⁸ Ackerman, p. 35.

³⁹ Margaret Barker has written extensively on this topic. She explains, “The Lady, as she was remembered in the imagery of later texts, was symbolised by a tree and by water. She had a throne, she was the Queen of Heaven, she was both the mother and the consort of the kings, but also the consort of the Lord, she gave eternal life/resurrection, she fed her devotees, she was radiant, superior to earthly light, she was the mother of all creation, she was the anointing oil, she was the archetypal angel high priest, she was the genius of Jerusalem and its guardian. She had been abandoned just before the first temple was destroyed, and some of her devotees had fled to Egypt.” M. Barker, Wisdom: The Queen of Heaven, [Scottish Journal of Theology](#), Volume 55, Issue 2, May 2002, p. 147. She concludes (p. 159), “The Queen of Heaven can still be seen in the traditional icons of the Holy Wisdom. In some she is enthroned within her circles of light, winged, fiery, crowned as Queen, and carrying the staff of the high priest and a scroll. In others she hovers over the apostles as they break bread and celebrate the Eucharist.” See also: Barker, [The Mother of Lord: Volume 1: The Lady in the Temple](#), T&T Clark, 2012. Day, [The Tree Restored in the Holy of Holies](#), 10/19/2019. William Dever, [Did God have a wife?: Archaeology and Folk Religion in Ancient Israel](#). Eerdmans, 2008. Raphael Patai, *The Hebrew Goddess (Jewish Folklore & Anthropology)* 3rd Revised edition (1990). Daniel Peterson, [Nephi and His Asherah](#), *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies*: Vol. 9: No. 2, Article 4, 2000, p. 16-25.

⁴⁰ Shiloh, which figures importantly in the early chapters of the Book of Samuel, was a significant northern sanctuary in the early Israelite occupation of the land. It was probably destroyed by the Philistines in the middle of the eleventh century B.C.E., and Jeremiah wants to remind his hearers that Jerusalem’s temple could be destroyed for the same reasons the Shiloh site was: failure to obey God.

5. God tells Jeremiah to “pray not for this people... for I will not hear thee!” (Jer. 7.16).⁴¹
6. God tells Jeremiah that the people will not listen to him (Jer. 7.27).
7. The people cause their children to “burn their sons and their daughters in the fire” (Jer. 7.31).⁴²
8. Jeremiah castigates “the pen of the scribes” (Jer. 8.8-9).
9. Jeremiah weeps for the slain of his people (Jer. 9.1).
10. “I will make Jerusalem a den of dragons... desolate... without inhabitant” (Jer. 9.11).
11. The Lord still has love for Judah: “I exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness” (Jer. 9.24).⁴³
12. God condemns the nations that oppress Israel (Jer. 10.1-25).⁴⁴
 - a. The ways of the heathen: cutteth a tree... adorn it with silver and gold... they are like a scarecrow in a cucumber patch, they cannot speak, they have to be carried, for they cannot walk!” (Jer. 10.3-5).
 - b. “They are vanity... brutish” God describes the makers of idols (Jer. 10.14-16).
 - c. “The noise of the bruit is come, and a great commotion out of the north country!” (Jer. 10.22).⁴⁵

Jeremiah 11.1-13.27: Jeremiah’s Lament – Judah has broken her covenant with God

1. Conspiracy is found among the men of Judah... they went after false gods... I will bring evil upon them... they burned incense to Baal (Jer. 11.9-13).
2. Do not pray for them! (Jer. 11.14). See also Jer. 7.16 and 14.11.
3. Jeremiah’s first lament (Jer. 11.18-23).
 - a. “I was like a lamb to the slaughter” (Jer. 11.19).
4. The men of Jeremiah’s hometown of Anathoth conspire to assassinate him (Jer. 11.21-23).
5. Jeremiah’s second lament (Jer. 12.1-6).
 - a. He asks, “Why do the wicked prosper?” (Jer. 12.1).

⁴¹ See also Jer. 11.14 and 14.11. God instructs Jeremiah not to plead for the people; they must take responsibility for their own actions. This remarkable request reflects the efficacy of prophetic prayer, a common theme of the Torah narratives in reference to Moses. *The Jewish Study Bible*, p. 939. Mormon records a situation that may be similar: “Behold, I had led them, notwithstanding their wickedness I had led them many times to battle, and had loved them, according to the love of God which was in me, with all my heart; and **my soul had been poured out in prayer unto my God all the day long for them; nevertheless, it was without faith, because of the hardness of their hearts**” ([Mormon 3.12](#)), emphasis added.

⁴² *Topheth or the Valley of Ben-hinnom* runs along the southwest borders of the biblical city of Jerusalem as it was expanded in the time of Hezekiah. It was an area known for tombs and the sacrifice of children to the pagan gods Baal and Molech (see Isa. 30.33; Jer. 19.6, 11-14; 2 Chron. 28.3; 33.6). King Josiah attempted to stop the practice (2 Kings 23.10), but it apparently continued after his death. The Hebrew expression, “*gei’ hinnom*,” “valley of Hinnom,” underlies the terms “*geihinnom*” or “*gehenna*,” which designates Hell in Jewish tradition. *The Jewish Study Bible*, p. 940.

⁴³ יהוה עֲשֵׂה חֶסֶד מִשְׁפָּט וְיִדְקָה בְּאֶרֶץ: “The Lord makes *hesed*, *mishpat* and *tzedakah* in the earth” (Jer. 9.24). *Hesed* = lovingkindness, *mishpat* = fairness/justice, *tzedakah* = righteousness.

⁴⁴ The prophet’s account of the Temple sermon concludes with God’s condemnation of those who oppress Israel. Although no texts from Isaiah ben Amoz are cited, this section reflects Isaian thinking in which nations are first brought by God to punish Israel and then condemned for their cruelty and failure to acknowledge God (Isaiah chapters 5-12; 13-14). This section has many affinities with the exilic message of what scholars call “Second Isaiah” (Isaiah chapters 40-55). *The Jewish Study Bible*, p. 946.

⁴⁵ Jeremiah predicts dangers coming out of the north in Jeremiah 1.13-14, 4.6, 6.1, 6.22, 10.22, 13.20, 46.20-24. In Jeremiah 25.9 he predicts that this enemy will be Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon.

6. The Lord promises “after I have plucked them out will I return, and have compassion on them, and bring them again... every man to his land” (Jer. 12.15).
7. Jeremiah’s Symbolic Acts
 - a. Jeremiah is told to hide his girdle near the Euphrates River (Jer. 13.1-11).
 - i. And the word of the Lord came to me a second time: “Take the loincloth which you bought, which is about your loins, and go at once to Perath (Euphrates KJV) and cover it up there in a cleft of the rock.”⁴⁶
 - b. The Potter’s Wheel (Jer. 18.1-12).⁴⁷
 - c. The Potter’s Earthen Bottle (Jer. 19.1-15). God tells the elders of Judah he will smash the people and city like Jeremiah smashes the earthen bottle.⁴⁸

Jeremiah 14.1-17.27: The Great Drought and Judah’s Coming Punishment

1. Judah suffers a great drought, and Jeremiah sees this as just punishment for her sins (Jer. 14.1-22).⁴⁹
2. Jeremiah’s third lament (Jer. 15.10-21). He is distressed over the coming punishment (Jer. 15.1-18).
 - a. Their widows are increased to be more numerous than the sands of the seas (Jer. 15.8).⁵⁰
 - b. Woe is me, my mother... everyone doth curse me! (Jer. 15.10).⁵¹
 - c. “Surely, a mere remnant of you will I spare for a better fate!” (Jer. 15.11, JPS).⁵²
3. God responds to Jeremiah’s lament (Jer. 15.19-21).
 - a. “If you return, I will bring thee again” (Jer. 15.19).

⁴⁶ JPS translation. Placing the loincloth in a cleft of rock by the Perath, i.e., the Euphrates River in Mesopotamia, makes the loincloth filthy and symbolizes exile to Babylonia. Interpreters debate whether Jeremiah actually traveled to the Euphrates for this act or chose a location close to Jerusalem with a similar name. *The Jewish Study Bible*, p. 952. See: Mike Day, [Jeremiah’s Symbolic Acts](#).

⁴⁷ Potter (Hebrew – יוצר *yotzer*. This is related to the verb יצר *yatzar*, “to form.”) This idea is related to God and his creative power (see Gen. 2.7-8, 19; Isa. 43.1, 21; 44.21; 45.9, 11, 18; Ps. 95.5; 104.26). Apart from being an impressive illustration of the omnipotence of Jehovah, this image of the potter working with clay reinforces the covenant relationship of the Lord with his people. He has the power to form them as individuals and as a nation and to then destroy them and start over again at his discretion. In history, when the pot has become marred, the Lord has destroyed it and started over again. We see examples of this all throughout history: such as Noah’s Flood, the Scattering of Israel in 721 B.C. by the Assyrians, the destruction of the Nephite nation, and the Apostasy and the Restoration. [Jeremiah’s Symbolic Acts](#).

⁴⁸ God instructs Jeremiah to smash the jug in front of the elders and priests who accompanied him as witnesses. His action symbolizes God’s intention to slash or destroy the city of Jerusalem so that it becomes an unclean place of destruction like Topheth. *The Jewish Study Bible*, p. 965.

⁴⁹ Throughout the Bible, the Lord was portrayed as a God who controlled the cosmos and thus would bring rain to the people each year so that they would be able to grow crops and raise cattle to provide themselves with food (see, e.g., Deut. 11.13-17; 28.1-14; 1 Kings 17.1). In an ancient subsistence economy based upon agriculture, a drought frequently meant starvation for many (1 Kings chapters 17-18). This was especially so in Israel, where rain was seasonal, falling in the fall and winter only. In later Judaism, various rites were performed to assure that rain would fall during the rainy season. *The Jewish Study Bible*, p. p. 954.

⁵⁰ This is a twist on the promise God made to Abraham regarding his descendants (Gen. 22.17).

⁵¹ See Jeremiah 20.14-18 and Job 3.11-19.

⁵² God responds by claiming that a remnant will survive, a central prophetic idea that is especially prominent in Isaiah (Isa. 4.2-6; 6.1-13; 7.1-9; 10.20-26; 37.30-32).

4. Jeremiah is told to not take a wife – fertility prophesies (Jer. 16.1-17.27).⁵³
 - a. They shall die a grievous death... sword... famine (Jer. 16.3-4).
 - b. They shall not be buried (Jer. 16.6).
 - c. There will be no more voice of gladness, the bridegroom, or the bride (Jer. 16.9).
 - d. The Lord speaks of the future gathering of his people (Jer. 16.14-15).
 - e. “I will recompense their iniquity and their sin double!” (Jer. 16.18).⁵⁴
 - f. A polemic against the worship of idols (Jer. 17.1-11).
 - i. The sin of Judah is written with a pen of iron and a diamond point! (Jer. 17.1).⁵⁵
 - ii. A polemic against the *אשרים* *asherim* (groves) and the green trees and the high hills (Jer. 17.2).
 - g. Jeremiah’s fourth lament (Jer. 17.14-18).
 - i. “Heal me!” (Jer. 17.14).
 - ii. “Be not a terror unto me!” (Jer. 17.17).
 - h. God responds to Jeremiah’s complaint (Jer. 17.19-27). This sounds very much like a Deuteronomistic editing. Not everyone agrees with this assessment.⁵⁶

Jeremiah 18.1-20.18: Jeremiah’s Symbolic Message of the Potter and the Clay

1. Jeremiah’s symbolic act involving the potter (Jer. 18.1-23).⁵⁷
2. Jeremiah’s fifth lament (Jer. 18.18-23).
 - a. Jeremiah begs God to deliver up the children of his enemies to the famine and the sword (Jer. 18.21).
3. Jeremiah’s symbolic act of the Earthen Bottle (Jer. 19.1-15).
4. Jeremiah’s Persecution and Lamentations (Jer. 20.1-18).
 - a. Pashur son of Immer the priest (Jer. 20.1).⁵⁸
 - b. Jeremiah renames Pashur “terror all around” (Jer. 20.3).

⁵³ Jeremiah's failure to produce children serves as a model for Judah's inability to sustain life due to the drought that punishes the nation. *The Jewish Study Bible*, p. 958.

⁵⁴ This can be tied to Isaiah 40.2, “Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned: for **she hath received of the Lord's hand double for all her sins.**”

⁵⁵ The reference to a stylus of iron, engraved with an adamant [diamond] point on the tablet of their hearts is a **metaphorical description of the indelible nature of Judah's wrongdoing**. This image fits this section, which imagines Israel's sin as grave and its punishment as final, with no opportunity for repentance. In Jeremiah, this engraved sin will ultimately be replaced by divine instruction ("torah") written on the heart when the covenant is restored (see Jer. 31.31-34). *The Jewish Study Bible*, p. 960, emphasis added.

⁵⁶ God instructs Jeremiah to stand by the people's entrance to the Temple and announce that they should observe the Shabbat, i.e., the seventh day of rest and holy service to God which constitutes one of the fundamental signs of the covenant between God and Israel **especially in the Priestly tradition** (see Gen. 2.1-3; Exod. 20.8-11; 23.12; 31.12-17; 35.2-3; Lev. 23.3; Deut. 5.12-15). Although many modern interpreters consider this passage (and the emphasis on Shabbat) to be exilic or postexilic, Shabbat observance is mentioned in preexilic prophetic texts (Amos 8.5; Isa. 1.13). It is likely, however, that the Shabbat took on new significance in the exilic period, as holy space (the destroyed Temple) was replaced with holy time. *The Jewish Study Bible*, p. 962, emphasis added.

⁵⁷ For commentary on this, see above (Jeremiah 11.1-13.27: Jeremiah’s Lament – Judah has broken her covenant with God, #6 – Jeremiah’s Symbolic Acts).

⁵⁸ Pashur son of Immer is otherwise unknown. Curiously, his name is derived from an Egyptian term, "psh-hr," "portion of (the god) Horus," suggesting that Judah was open to Egyptian influence at this period; given its military alliances with Egypt, this is not surprising. Gedaliah son of Pashhur, who is part of a group in Jer. 38.1 that attempts to have Jeremiah put to death for sedition, may be this Pashhur's son. *The Jewish Study Bible*, p. 966.

- c. All of Judah will go into captivity in Babylon (Jer. 20.4).
- d. The treasures of Jerusalem will be taken into Babylon (Jer. 20.5).
- e. Jeremiah accuses Pashur of false prophesying (Jer. 20.6).
- f. Pashur will die in Babylon (Jer. 20.6)
- g. Jeremiah's sixth lament (Jer. 20.7-13).
 - i. He accuses God of deceiving him,⁵⁹ he says "I am in derision daily"... "I will not make mention of him (God)... but his word was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones" (Jer. 20.9).
 - ii. "Sing unto the Lord, praise the Lord" (Jer. 20.13).⁶⁰
- h. Jeremiah's seventh and final lament (Jer. 20.14-18).
 - i. Cursed be the day I was born! (Jer. 20.14).⁶¹

Near the end of the podcast, Bryce shared the following from Elder Jeffrey R. Holland:

I have a theory about those earlier dispensations and the leaders, families, and people who lived then...I have thought often about them and the destructive circumstances that confronted them. They faced terribly difficult times and, for the most part, did not succeed in their dispensations. Apostasy and darkness eventually came to every earlier age in human history. Indeed, the whole point of the Restoration of the gospel in these latter days is that it had not been able to survive in earlier times and therefore had to be pursued in one last, triumphant age. We know the challenges Abraham's posterity faced (and still do). We know of Moses's problems with an Israelite people who left Egypt but couldn't quite get Egypt to leave them. Isaiah was the prophet who saw the loss of the 10 Israelite tribes to the north. Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel were all prophets of captivity. Peter, James, John, and Paul, the great figures of the New Testament, all saw apostasy creeping into their world almost before the Savior had departed and certainly while they themselves were still living. Think of the prophets of the Book of Mormon, living in a dispensation ending with such painful communication between Mormon and Moroni about the plight they faced and the nations they loved dissolving into corruption, terror, and chaos. In short, apostasy and destruction of one kind or another was the ultimate fate of every general dispensation we have ever had down through time. But here's my theory. My theory is that those great men and women, the leaders in those ages past, were able to keep going, to keep testifying, to keep trying to do their best, not because they knew that *they* would succeed but because they knew that *you* would. I believe they took courage and hope not so much from their own circumstances as from yours—a magnificent congregation of young adults like you tonight gathered by the hundreds of thousands around the world in a determined effort to see the gospel prevail and triumph...One way or another, I think virtually all of the prophets and early apostles had their visionary moments of our time—a view that gave them courage in their own less-successful eras. Those early brethren knew an amazing amount about us. Prophets such as Moses, Nephi, and the brother of Jared saw the latter days in tremendously detailed vision. Some of what they saw wasn't pleasing, but surely all those earlier generations took heart from knowing that there would finally be one dispensation that would not fail. Ours, not theirs, was the day that gave them heavenly and joyful anticipations and caused them to sing

⁵⁹ This may be related to the expected invasion of the Scythians that did not happen. See above.

⁶⁰ The concluding statement, sing unto the Lord, Praise the Lord, recalls the formulaic language of the Song of the Sea (Exod. 15.21) and other psalms (Pss. 33.3; 68.5; 96.1 ; 98.1; cf. Isa. 42.10; Pss. 113.1; 135.1; 1 17.1; 148.1; 150.1). It is **unclear why Jeremiah's mood shifts so suddenly here**. Ibid, p. 976, emphasis added.

⁶¹ See Job 3.

and prophesy of victory. Ours is the day, collectively speaking, toward which the prophets have been looking from the beginning of time, and those earlier brethren are over there still cheering us on! In a very real way, *their* chance to consider themselves fully successful depends on *our* faithfulness and *our* victory. I love the idea of going into the battle of the last days representing Alma and Abinadi and what they pled for and representing Peter and Paul and the sacrifices they made. If you can't get excited about that kind of assignment in the drama of history, you can't get excited! Jeffrey R. Holland, "Terror, Triumph, and a Wedding Feast," CES Fireside, 12 Sept. 2004, 5.